77 Tips for a Grown-Up Man

Second Edition

Including 44 Thoughts for Anybody

Kurt Starnes

Smashwords Edition

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To my daughter, Ellison:

All the stars in the sky are there for you.

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Acknowledgments

This book is dedicated to my brilliant daughter, whose presence has motivated me to improve myself and inspired me to write this book. She has transformed my life. Thank you, Ellison.

To my mom, dad, grandmother and grandfather, who laid the foundation and provided the support I needed to take action and grow — I love you and thank you.

And to my other family members and friends, both online and off, who have supported me with kind words and encouragement, and some with editing — I send you all my sincere thanks.

I would also like to give special recognition to Lisa Brandt Heckman and Lifehacker (lifehacker.com). Lisa posted a story from Lifehacker, “10 Things You Need To Do If You Were Just Fired,” to Facebook, which inspired me to write this book. Thank you, Lisa.

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Preface

Since I’m not completely grown up, the tips in this book address some parts of my life that may resemble a grown-up’s life. I’ve still got a lot to learn, so please know that I’m not preaching from these pages. And, just because a tip appears in this book doesn’t mean I’ve mastered it. Growing up is a process without end, not an act.

I've chosen these 77 tips because they've worked for me or are worthy goals. This list is neither definitive nor exhaustive. Scores of tips have been excluded because I considered them too obvious. Many included tips are general and stand on their own, while others are just starting points for further discussion or research.

The careful reader may notice that tips about certain fundamental parts of life are absent from this book. I'm still working on those. If I live long enough, I hope to better understand what I haven't addressed here.

These 77 tips are drawn from my lifetime of ups and downs and from the people who were there along the way to give me a hand. I hope you find something in here that makes you think and motivates you to improve yourself. I'll do my best to keep growing up and improving this list.

In this second edition, I've deleted some tips and added some new ones. I've also tried to clean up my prose.

There's also a new section at the end — 44 Thoughts for Anybody.

Finally, I happen to have been born a heterosexual male. The tips and philosophies in this book could also apply to folks and relationships of all kinds.

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Introduction

The theme of sustainability is a big part of my life.

Before I start something that's supposed to help me, I ask myself, "Is it likely that I'll keep doing what I start today for a long time?" The tips on diet and exercise especially reflect this theme, but it's also valid for most of the other tips.

Some of these tips come from observing and listening to my parents and grandparents, and seeing their advice proven correct. Other tips are derived from my own big mistakes.

While my parenting philosophy may be somewhat unproven — my daughter is only a teenager — it appears to be working. So far.

My daughter's mom also plays a critical role and deserves credit for our remarkable girl. Even divorced, loving parents can raise well-adjusted kids.

This book will be most helpful if:

You have access to a computer that you can use to delve deeper into some of the tips on this list;

You've read this book's disclaimer and know that I don't have any professional qualifications;

You're smart enough not to do anything suggested in this book without reasonable thought and, if needed, consultation with a qualified professional;

You know that nothing worthwhile comes quickly or easily; and

You would like to live a long, healthy and satisfying life.

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Chapter 1: Eat Healthy

Being healthy and fit won't eliminate your struggles, but it will improve your ability to manage them. If you physically feel good, you're more likely to be happy.

You don't need another diet book telling you what is healthy and what is not — you should already know this. I'll make a few suggestions, but this chapter won't help you pick specific foods.

What you need to know is how many calories you're consuming each day and the distribution of carbohydrate, fat and protein calories in your daily diet. You may think you're eating well, but until you log and track the food you eat, you're just guessing.

1) Track your calories. Knowing your daily caloric intake is necessary if you want a meaningful understanding of your diet. Sites like Daily Burn (dailyburn.com) and Livestrong (livestrong.com) maintain large databases of grocery and restaurant foods that make it easy to find and log the stuff you eat. While both sites offer paid memberships, the features mentioned here are available with the free memberships.

After an initial set-up, both sites will show your daily calories burned against daily calories consumed. Several weeks of food logging should provide you with enough knowledge so that you don't need to continue recording every snack and meal. My eating habits occasionally drift towards carbohydrates, so a refresher course of food logging helps me get back to balance.

Unless asked, don't broadcast how many calories you just ate or the details of your diet plan. Most folks would rather enjoy their food without guilt, and hopefully your company.

2) Track your carbohydrate, fat and protein intake. Before you change your diet, you should understand the distribution of carbohydrate, protein and fat calories in the meals you eat. As you log and track your meals, both Daily Burn and Livestrong will chart this distribution on a daily basis.

When I first started logging meals, I was surprised to discover that I was getting well over 50% of my daily calories from carbohydrates, which is generally considered too much.

Don't obsess over an exact proportion, just keep it balanced in somewhat equal measures. I try to get about 40% of my calories from carbohydrates and about 30% of calories from protein and fat respectively. This is a general rule, but do conduct your own research or consider checking with a professional to see if your needs may be different.

As you learn about the calorie content of different foods by following tip No. 1, you'll also learn the carbohydrate, fat and protein calorie distribution in the foods you eat.

After several days, take a look at your diet logs. Are you consuming more calories than

you're burning? Is your carbohydrate, fat or protein consumption disproportionate from the others? If so, make adjustments and find the balance.

If I eat too many carbohydrates, I crave sweets. Once I bring protein and fat levels back up, those cravings disappear. Your mileage may vary.

3) Get a small scale for your kitchen. This is an important tool for accurately weighing food items and servings that are not already measured. I bought a digital postal scale at an office supply store, but you may already have a scale around the house. Don't worry, you won't need to weigh food for the rest of your life. After a few weeks, your serving size estimating skills will become more finely tuned.

4) Learn about chia seeds. In the first edition of this book, I listed five foods to eat, each as a tip. In this second edition I'm only going to recommend one food — chia seeds.

The chia seed has changed my life. It's nutritious, will take on the flavor of what you mix it with and bulks-up to make you feel full.

Do yourself a favor and learn about chia seeds. Then get a bag and make some chia power pudding. It's a great chia starter food that even my teenage daughter likes. Win.

(Search: chia, chia power pudding)

5) Be restaurant friendly. My goal is not to eat ideal foods all the time, but to eat healthy foods most of the time. This is part of a sustainable diet.

Don't highly customize your order at a restaurant, just pick something off the menu that looks nutritious and enjoy your meal out. It's not the single perfect dish that matters, but years of eating mostly good food that counts.

6) Eat more fruits and vegetables first, consider organics second. There's a lively debate about the benefits of organics vs. non-organics that I'll leave for you to research.

If your diet is high in processed foods and includes an occasional apple, it's probably not going to make much of a difference what kind of apple you eat.

I think it's more important to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables of any kind than to first focus on organics vs. non-organics. A good time to decide to go organic is after you're already eating lots of fresh produce.

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Chapter 2: Get Fit

You probably won't maintain an exercise regimen over many years if it's complicated, unpleasant and takes too long. If you presently go to the gym and lift weights for three hours a day, will you maintain this routine for 10 years? 20 years?

My somewhat obsessive-compulsive personality led to cycles of intense workouts for months followed by periods of total inactivity. I needed to create a fitness program that was quick, effective and sustainable. After many years, this program continues to work for me — and it may work for you.

Quick means that each exercise tip can be completed in about 10 minutes and the walk or jog in 30 minutes. Effective means that each exercise works large muscle groups using your own body weight. This ensures natural, balanced muscle development and strength. Sustainable means that each day the exercises can be done wherever you are — no gym, weights or specialized equipment is needed.

This is not a training program for a marathon or the path to become a bodybuilder. These are basic tips to employ for the rest of your life so that you'll look fit and feel good.

As you build stamina and get stronger, you may want to run farther and add new exercises to your routine. Go for it! Just try to avoid creating an overly demanding and complex program that causes you to dread your next workout.

7) Pull up your body. Get a bar and hang it in a doorway that you pass through frequently. I hung one in the door between my room and bathroom. Start with just one pull-up. If you can only do one, then do that one and rest a full day before you make another go. Maybe you can only do one again, maybe two, but you will get stronger and be able to do more if you continue to do this exercise every other day. Keep this up until you can do at least five sets of one, with a one-minute break in between each set.

Sustainable means doing no more than five sets every other day — in each set doing as many as you can until you can't pull up your body again. This routine should take around 10 minutes and no more than 15, even if you're doing large numbers of repetitions. Remember, there's no hurry.

It's not how soon you get in shape, but how long you stay in shape.

Search the terms below to learn about different grips and the muscle groups they target. If you travel often, you could get a portable pull-up/chin-up bar, but don't worry if you miss a few days — just don't let too much time pass between workouts. What you do over a period of years is more important than what you do over weeks or months.

(Search: pull-ups, chin-ups)

8) Push up your body. All you need for push-ups is yourself, gravity and the ground. You should find these things wherever you are. Do five sets, each set as many as you can with one minute of rest between sets. Do these every other day on the days you don't do pull-ups/chin-ups.

For proper form and to learn about different styles, search push-ups on YouTube. As you get stronger, you may want to get more creative.

Like pulling up your body, pushing up your body works large muscle groups and should develop your upper body in a natural, balanced way using your own body weight.

9) Propel your body over land. Once again, just you, gravity and the ground are needed for this exercise. Start with 30 minute walks every other day and add some short jogs during the walks — but only when it feels comfortable. Your goal is a 30-minute jog every other day. If your plan is to only walk, then doing so daily is fine. Keep it fun and don't push yourself too much. You're not training for a marathon, you're establishing a lifestyle.

If you dread your next jog, walk instead. If you miss a few days, don't worry — just get

back out as soon as you can. Consistency over many years is better than brief streaks of intense activity.

As you get stronger and build stamina, you may want to run farther and faster. That's okay, just don't create a routine that becomes so strenuous that you dread your next outing. Slow and steady over many years will win the race.

10) Make your body like a board. This is called the plank hold and it's very good for strengthening the muscles of your core.

Lie on your stomach with your shoulders propped-up above your elbows then raise and straighten your body from your feet to your shoulders while squeezing your abdominal and gluteal muscles. If this is too difficult, try it from your knees. The goal is to hold your body straight for as long as possible. There's also a variation doing this on your side, which instructions you'll find via the search terms below.

This exercise may be difficult, but try to work towards a 60 to 90 second hold for each set. Do four to five sets with one minute of rest in between sets. Be sure to rest in between days.

(Search: ab plank hold, ab side bridge)

11) Learn good form running. A Harvard study found that running barefoot or wearing shoes with minimal cushioning can diminish or eliminate heel strike, which lessens the impact of each stride thus reducing the chance of running-based injuries.

Since I learned the proper form, my running speed has increased dramatically and I don't feel like I'm working harder. While I rarely run without shoes, I regularly wear minimal running shoes.

(Search: harvard running study, good form running, minimal shoes)

12) Get a six-pack. Not of beer, but of well-defined abdominal muscles. The six-pack is mostly the result of diet, not exercise. Abdominal exercises will not spot reduce fat at your midsection. Focus on basic training, as outlined above, combined with a balanced, managed diet and your six-pack will emerge.

13) Check your BMI. The Body Mass Index simply looks at the relationship of your weight to your height. It's a very general measurement, but may be of some help in determining if you're carrying too much weight. If you haven't weighed yourself in a while, do it now.

It wasn't until I weighed myself years ago that I realized how much weight I had gradually gained over a long period of time. Strangely, I didn't think I looked overweight in a mirror, but the scales and my BMI measurement said otherwise.

(Search: bmi)

14) Check your blood pressure. If you're already getting regular physicals, you're covered. If not, on the next trip to the grocery or drug store check your blood pressure. You've probably seen the machines located near the pharmacy at most stores.

These machines shouldn't replace a doctor, but a self-administered check-up could provide a valuable warning if something is wrong.

15) Work towards a personal best in some activity or event. A record number of push-ups or the fastest time for a walk or run — do something you've not done in years, or ever. Such a personal best can be a fulfilling accomplishment, especially if you can now outperform your teen or 20-something self.

Fitness achievements and improved health will inspire confidence in all other areas of your life.

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Chapter 3: Take Control

I've struggled with addiction in various forms for a significant part of my life. It was only after I overcame many of those addictions that I realized that addiction itself is a loss of self-control. What seems profoundly obvious to me now was hidden behind denial. If I had been able to see addiction as a character weakness, I might have taken control of my life sooner. If you suffer from an addiction or two or three, I hope this perspective helps you retake control of your life.

16) Drink alcohol in moderation. Or don't drink it at all. Once you start logging calories and tracking your carbohydrate, protein and fat intake, you moderate to heavy drinkers might be surprised at how quickly your daily diet plan fails.

While there are studies that show very moderate, daily consumption of alcohol may be beneficial to your health, regular, excessive drinking will make losing weight and keeping fit extremely difficult. My experience says that it will also create problems in your life well beyond your physical health.

(Search: diet fat alcohol)

17) Quit Nicotine. If you smoke or use other tobacco products, you may have started as an act of rebellion or independence. Nicotine can quickly take control and render you helplessly dependent, which is hardly the mark of a rebel. Maybe you have the personality type that allows you to decide when you want to smoke, but for most folks, including me at one time, smoking isn't a choice.

I quit with the help of nicotine gum, but it was still very difficult. Whatever method you choose, take action and quit now. I've never met a person who regretted quitting cigarettes or tobacco products.

18) Quit drugs. Just like nicotine addiction, drug dependency represents a personal loss of control. All of the rationalizations you can muster will not justify regular drug use. If you're using something daily, you must quit. Reality is not improved on drugs and you are likely not more productive and creative on drugs.

The ultimate trip is a cold sober brain trying to wrap itself around the wonders of reality.

You may be able to refer to a great artist, musician or writer who created a masterpiece while high, but for every one of those there are likely millions who died or exist in obscurity. Human senses are highly evolved and almost always function best unhindered.

Decide to take control and quit. Get started today at the top of this list with health and fitness and seek professional help if needed. A healthy diet and exercise not only helped me think clearly and feel better, they gave me something productive to do as I eliminated destructive behavior.

19) Enjoy chocolate and sweets? I'm tempted to say don't worry about this vice if you've got the above three under control. But, like everything else, moderation applies. The good news is that my research and personal experience show that you can occasionally splurge on treats while maintaining a healthy weight, as long as you eat well and exercise most of the time.

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Chapter 4: Look Sharp

These next tips have nothing to do with being a metrosexual. They're about basic male hygiene and taking pride in your appearance. Since when was neglecting your body considered manly?

20) Use a washcloth or exfoliating soap. Humans are constantly shedding skin, so when you bathe use a washcloth or some liquid scrub soap. There's even exfoliating bar soap. This bathing practice will slough off dead skin cells, help to unblock pores, aid circulation and just make you feel better.

21) Moisturize your face. If you're getting an adequate amount of healthy fats in your diet, you may already enjoy the natural suppleness this can bring to your skin from the inside. But, you may also need some extra help and protection from the outside. I use a daily moisturizer with sunscreen and apply it after showering. Also, there's nothing wrong with regularly using a good eye cream.

There are now some excellent men's facial moisturizers available at your local market or pharmacy — you'll likely find them in the shaving products section. For natural or higher-end men's products, visit one of the large beauty supply chains or department store cosmetic counters.

22) Manage thy nose and ear hairs. While thick nests of ear and nostril hair may have provided some benefit to our distant ancestors, these protruding tufts are now frightening to loved ones, friends and children.

End the horror — buy some ear and nose hair clippers. It was a difficult purchase for me as it was an admission that I was getting old. But don't resist. Everyone's getting older at the same pace.

23) Yes, consider managing those other hairs. If you have special preferences for your mate, it's only fair that you consider your own bodyscaping strategy.

24) Keep your fingernails and toenails trimmed and neat. Whether you do this yourself or get a manicure and pedicure, it will improve your appearance and self-esteem. It will also make a good impression on those who notice. Well-kept nails and cuticles are signs of calmness and self-control.

I have a history of nail biting and cuticle picking, so this is one of those tips I still struggle with.

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Chapter 5: Learn Something

While children and young adults are formally charged with learning, us grown-ups sometimes ease-up on daily education. With most of civilization's collective knowledge at our fingertips, it's an injustice to let a day pass without learning at least one thing, regardless of your age.

25) Listen. Especially to folks older than you. While there is merit to learning by screwing-up, there's also some serious positive reinforcement to be gained from following good advice and experiencing it work.

26) Use your smart phone to get smart. Silently reading and tapping out text on your mobile phone at a lunch table or social event is rude and unacceptable. Consulting a search engine to find the answer to an interesting question or to recall a fleeting fact is acceptable, should be encouraged and can be fun.

In school, I was taught that if I came upon a word that I didn't understand, I should look it up in a dictionary. That rule has been modernized, extended and expanded for the networked age. If you come across a word, subject, event or anything you don't understand or know about, look it up — on the web.

27) Learn how to perform an effective web search. The information you're looking for is probably on the Internet, but you have to find it first. My daughter and I play a mobile phone game to see who can grab the information we seek with the simplest, quickest search. It's fun and constructive. I think this trial and error method is the best way to learn how to do a good search.

As you've seen, I sometimes add a few search terms after certain tips to aid your further research. You may have noted that I don't capitalize words that should be capitalized. Most search engines ignore caps and punctuation, so an efficient search can also ignore such formatting.

My favorite tool for an effective search is the exact phrase search, where the search terms are placed in the correct order within quotation marks. For example, a search for the terms *77 tips* without quotes returns 299 million hits on Google. Google is returning every webpage where both of these terms appear anywhere and in any order on those webpages. But, if I place the search terms in quotation marks, *"77 tips,"* then Google only returns 52,200 hits. Google is only returning websites where the search terms are adjacent and in the same order as my search terms in quotes. This can be a huge help and can be made even more powerful when used with additional search terms outside of the quotes, like *"77 tips" grown-up*, which is how you might search for this book.

28) Consult Wikipedia. Like any other encyclopedia, the information at Wikipedia is only as good as its sources. Pay close attention to the veracity of the references at the

bottom of each subject page and follow the links for more detailed information. Wikipedia can be an outstanding place to start any quest for knowledge, just don't make it your only source.

29) Take a free class. Stanford and MIT are just two of many universities offering everything from individual lectures to full, free online courses. iTunes U also offers a broad selection of university classes and material including films and audiobooks. Finally, check out The Khan Academy, which offers over 3,000 video lessons and has a goal to provide a free education to anyone.

The amount of free educational material online is so vast that entire books, and websites, are probably devoted to this one subject. Your favorite search engine is the best tool for finding free courses that interest you.

(Search: free mit, free stanford, khan academy and itunes u)

30) Consult YouTube instructional videos. For almost anything you may want to learn how to do, there is at least one video on YouTube showing you exactly how to do it. Instruction on cooking, gymnastics, exercise, driving, yoga and many more subjects await you. Of course, seek out credible sources and think before you do anything suggested in a video.

31) Know the exact time you were born. Your birth time should be right on the face of your birth certificate. I'm amazed at how few of my family and friends know this about themselves.

First light for me was at 3:43 p.m. on September 1, 1966.

32) Know your blood type. If you don't know your blood type, call your doctor and find out. It's your body and you never know when this information might save your life.

I'm A+.

33) Know your DNA. Since I haven't had a DNA screening yet, I'll wait for the next edition of this book to provide you with a firsthand account. I recommend that you consult a search engine or someone more familiar with the process if you'd like to learn more.

While it may seem frightening to learn that you might have a predisposition to a certain disease or condition, advance notice may provide you with an opportunity to treat and mitigate potential threats.

34) Learn about our planet, the Solar System and the Universe. On a cosmological scale, the Solar System is a tiny, intimate place. It's important to know some very basic facts about our home — and the Universe beyond.

The perspective provided by knowing basic facts about things beyond Earth can change the way you think. If you don't know, look up the answers to the suggestions below.

You should know the distance from the Earth to the Sun and why we have seasons.

You should know the distance around the Equator.

You should know how long it takes the Earth to orbit the Sun. You did know that the Earth orbits the Sun, right?

You should know the names of the planets in the Solar System in order, starting nearest the Sun.

You should know the speed of light.

You should know the approximate age of the Earth and the Universe.

You should know about how many galaxies there are and about how many stars are in each galaxy.

You might even appreciate how many planets astronomers think there are in the Universe.

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Chapter 6: Think

Just before my 40th year, I began to more closely examine my political and religious beliefs. I also began to take a closer look at the many philosophical schools of thought. Your path will likely be different than mine, but I think the process of introspection and curiosity among middle-aged and older folks regarding such subjects is quite common and important.

35) Challenge your beliefs, study what you oppose. Whatever your political, religious or philosophical beliefs, make an effort to study and understand systems you might presently disagree with. It can be enlightening to find points that you agree with in belief systems that you thought you were completely against.

There are lots of good, smart folks who have different beliefs than you — don't shun them, embrace them.

36) Be non-partisan. Partisanship is the distorted lens that allows you to find the flaws in the other party's candidate while overlooking the same flaws in your party's candidate. If you spend a lot of time expressing your displeasure at only one party, you're partisan and not digging deep enough.

I've only recently discovered that my political beliefs run across many different political schools. I bet yours do, too.

37) Keep an open mind. An open mind doesn't mean that you'll believe everything you see, read and are told — it just means that you'll give most things thoughtful consideration. An open mind is emblematic of a skeptic. Only after examining the evidence and learning more will you be closer to an opinion.

38) Know the limits of your knowledge. Before large online social networks, when folks spent most of their time conversing in small groups, you might have been able to play loose with the facts. No more. With potentially hundreds, thousands or even more reading your words daily, the chances of being tripped-up by a scholar are greater than ever. Be careful.

It's okay if you don't know everything. When questioned, don't be afraid to answer, "I

don't know" — it's a smart reply.

39) Be positive. Your opinion about something says more about you than the subject of your opinion. Once you figure this out, your understanding of yourself and others will never be the same.

40) Appreciate your place. Occasionally take a moment to try to comprehend exactly where you are in the Universe — on a very small planet in an unimaginably immense space, where a tiny unit of measurement is the distance that light travels in a year.

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Chapter 7: Be A Great Dad

If you don't have children yet, then now is the best time to read the below tips. I highly recommend kids, but only if you're willing to contribute a significant portion of your life to them. Being a dad is not easy, but it's the most satisfying thing I've ever done.

What follows is a philosophy I've developed while raising my daughter, blended with the best lessons taught by my parents and grandparents. I think most of these tips would also apply to a son, but you probably don't need to be a gentleman and get your boy's door.

41) Make your mistakes count. Set an example for your children not as a perfect god, but as an imperfect human just like them. You won't be able to hide your mistakes, so highlight your failures and present them as endearing lessons on what not to do. This will create an environment of open dialog in which your kids will be more likely to admit and share their mistakes with you.

42) Your actions teach louder than your words. If you panic when you see a spider, your kids will do the same. Their reaction to a cut or scrape may be based more on your reaction than their pain. Your kids are watching everything you do and learning directly from your actions, and learning much less from your words. Don't underestimate this or their ability to copy the finest details of your behavior.

43) Discipline without anger. Getting mad at your child is not a form of discipline. Calmly, even lovingly, deliver strong, appropriate punishment. Your child is more likely to change and grow after losing an important privilege than from your anger and frustration with them.

44) Apologize. Parents make mistakes. When you do, it's very important to apologize to your child promptly and sincerely. You should do this not only because it's proper, but also because you want your kids to express the same behavior when they mess-up.

45) Be honest with your children. Don't trick your kids into eating right or behaving properly. Eating cookie dough does not cause worms and the Boogie Man will not get them for misbehaving. Be honest and explain why some foods are unhealthy and why certain behavior is unacceptable. They'll probably forgive you for tricking them about the Tooth Fairy, Easter Bunny and Santa Claus.

46) Be a mom. If you're married with kids and play the traditional working dad, take a

week off from work, send your wife on vacation and take care of the kids. Do everything your wife does — cook meals, do laundry, manage the household and wrangle the kids. After playing mom, your respect for your wife will have increased dramatically. And you may realize who has the tougher job.

47) Always get the door for a lady, even if she's your own daughter. Your daughter will not soon forget the example and it may ensure that she falls in love with a gentleman.

48) Spend time with your children. You may not know it yet, but you likely need them more than they need you. No gift you can give your children is more valuable than your time — be generous with it.

49) Stay neutral. Teach your kids how to think, learn and analyze. You should resist the urge to indoctrinate them into your belief systems. Be a strong example of what is proper and mete out firm discipline when appropriate, but allow your kids freedom in defining their own belief systems and philosophies.

As a parent, you have tremendous power to shape their young minds. Don't program them, present a fair view of all sides of every issue. Let them know how you feel, but also tell them that reasonable people may disagree with you. This exercise can be helpful for you and your kids.

50) Practice the Golden Rule. My daughter has asked me many difficult questions about how to act in certain situations. The Golden Rule (also known as Ethics of Reciprocity) almost always provides the answer. It can even be applied to your relationship with your children. If you don't know the rule, you'll remember it better if you look it up.

Entire self-help books on parenting, relationships and even business are rendered virtually unnecessary with this simple maxim.

51) Free your children. Of course you must consider the amount of freedom to give them based on their age and responsibility level, but fight the natural tendency to try to protect them from all potential evil. They'll eventually be on their own and an overly sheltered upbringing could make their struggle for independence much more difficult.

52) Don't move your child to a different class. It eventually happens to every kid — they end up in the class with the claimed worst or grouchiest teacher. Unless there's some serious misconduct by the teacher, issues like this are to be handled between you and your child, not you and the school administration.

It's your responsibility to tell your child that life is not always fair and that he or she must make the best of a less than ideal situation. This is critical preparation for your child's future.

53) Keep communication open. Don't act surprised, get mad or be overly sensitive when your kids tell you about a mistake they made or if they share something personal with you. Manage your emotions when they tell you things that are unexpected, even if you're totally freaking out inside. The tone of your voice and your reaction will determine to what degree they choose to share with you in the future.

54) Let kids do things their own way. Many times their solution is not only original, but superior to yours. My daughter taught me this tip.

Innovation is the result of trying and doing things in new ways.

55) Say "YOLO" to your kids. If you didn't know, YOLO is an acronym for You Only Live Once. It's a popular saying among kids my daughter's age — teenagers.

Since I've found that it's easy for me to embarrass my daughter in public places, a kindly spoken "YOLO" to her after I commit an embarrassing act is very satisfying to me — in a hipster-dad kind of way.

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Chapter 8: Behave

This chapter could go on for pages, so I've just chosen tips that have been the most meaningful in my life. Many of these originated from the patience and guidance shown to me by the folks who have loved me the most.

56) Be a gentleman. A gentleman is more than a veneer of good manners. A gentleman is unselfish, dependable, honest and loyal.

57) Forgive. I can't say it more simply or more profoundly than Lily Tomlin: "Forgiveness means giving up all hope for a better past."

58) Always be kind. Every person you come across each day is struggling with something. Keep this in mind and be kind, even if the person you smile at does not smile back.

59) Don't get angry. Nothing good ever comes from anger. Solutions are found through a thoughtful strategy, not misdirected emotion. Not only is anger ineffective, it can damage feelings and harm relationships. But don't be passive — transform your anger into positive, constructive action.

60) Reserve the curse words. Curse words should be considered the nuclear option of your vocabulary. Instead of striking all curse words from your lexicon, give them purpose. Save them for the rare moments when maximum impact is required or when genuine distress needs to be expressed.

It may surprise you, but this is the same advice I give my teenage daughter.

61) Be credible. Your handshake and word should be your bond. If you say you'll do it, do it. The quickest way to regain lost credibility is to immediately commit to nothing, then work forward from there — one kept promise at a time.

62) Avoid hypocrisy. There's an innocent form of hypocrisy that I think is just part of human nature — one day I'm complaining to myself about the guy at the market with more than 15 items in the express lane and the next day I'm that guy. Since it's likely a universal trait, we're all experts at spotting it and calling it out. I've found that young children are especially sharp at recognizing these kinds of behavioral inconsistencies.

Be aware of your own hypocrisy as it can eventually undermine your credibility.

63) The thought counts. It's perfectly acceptable to thank someone via a thoughtful

email message, but a handwritten note on paper will probably make a stronger impression. A personal thank you message in any form is always better than nothing.

64) Choose your words carefully. While this is true for daily conversation and correspondence, it's especially valid for online activity. Assume that everything you post on the Internet will be viewed and read by everyone you know. And everyone you don't know.

Remember that once something is posted online, it could be archived via cache and made available forever, even if you delete the original.

65) Follow the rules — most of the time. The people that get caught are usually the ones constantly breaking the rules. I've found that if you follow the rules most of the time, there's a reasonable chance you won't get caught when certain circumstances dictate that a rule must be broken.

YOLO.

66) Be humble. You're not inherently better than anyone else, so why act that way? In my experience, arrogance is typically a function of insecurity or an unbroken run of success. Or both. If you've never failed, you're lucky, not smart.

67) Be a friendly and courteous driver. I'm certain that world peace will not be achieved until every driver embraces this tip and exercises simple courtesy on the road. What dumbfounds me is the rude driver who, at some time, must have benefitted from the kindness of a friendly driver.

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Chapter 9: Look Back

Our distant memories may fade as we get older, but they can be brightened by a picture, song or seeing the name of an old friend. Such simple remembrances can light up once dark regions of our brains and initiate a cascade of activity that can expose deep, linked memories. Revealing these hidden memories can be an extremely gratifying experience.

Experience gives our memories weight and meaning. The difficulty we have finding the most distant memories makes them scarce and gives them value.

68) Map every house in which you've lived. Go to *Google Maps* and create a new map in *My Maps*. Start the search with a click on the map in the general area of the home, then readjust the cursor before the next click. I like the satellite view because sometimes landmarks like lakes and parks help me find the target home. When found, drop a pin on the roof and add a description. Continue to the next home, repeat until complete.

If Google has photographed the locations of your homes, you'll be able to go to *Street View* and virtually travel up and down the streets of your old neighborhoods. This can be a deeply moving and powerful experience.

(Search: google my maps and street view)

69) Get back in touch with old friends online. I can't overstate how much it has meant for me to reunite with old friends via the Internet. It's not the same as being there, but regular online contact and interaction with the folks you've bonded with throughout your life is a meaningful way to keep the memory regions of your brain active. I've also become good friends with classmates who were once just acquaintances. I can't ever imagine going back to the time before I connected with so many people.

There are many communities online, but the place where you'll likely find most of your old friends is currently Facebook.

70) Save and review your old photos. And movies, too. These are the lifelines to your memories and some of the strongest links to your past. Spend some time reviewing your historic photos and consider digitizing then archiving them online, if you haven't already done so.

I'm working on a way to make this easier, but I'll save the plug until the very end of this book!

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Chapter 10: Look Ahead

There shouldn't be a day that marks the end of your productive life, when your work is finished and you decide you're going to sit in the sun and pass time. Instead, sit in the sun and plan your next big thing. There's never been a time when individuals were so empowered. Don't let it pass you by.

71) Hear. If your ability to hear is diminishing, get a hearing aid. Your inability to hear well not only handicaps you, but it creates an uncomfortable environment for the folks who'd like to talk with you. You might also miss something important.

You're not an old man, but a new cyborg. Humanity is entering an age when devices that can amplify and sharpen senses will become more common, even for folks with perfectly functioning senses.

72) See. If you've passed 40 and still don't need reading glasses, you're lucky. If you're around 40 and need to hold books and phones at arm's length to read, you're normal and need reading glasses.

Whether it's glasses, contacts or a surgical procedure, take action and improve your vision. There's just too much cool stuff you need to see.

73) Take pictures. If you have a mobile phone with a camera, make a habit of taking pictures. If you don't have a mobile phone camera, get an inexpensive pocket or disposable camera and keep it handy. You don't need a fancy camera and you don't have to wait for special events to take memorable photographs. Some of my favorite images were not taken on expensive cameras and are not technically outstanding — and they're probably not very interesting to anyone except me.

Remember, you're not just shooting pictures for yourself, but for your progeny to enjoy

at some distant time in the future. Give them something to talk about.

74) Go first. Some say to follow the pioneers and learn from their mistakes. Nonsense. Start now, lead and learn from your own mistakes.

75) Set a goal to never quit setting goals. Each day is an opportunity to do something you've never done before or start working towards something you've never achieved. Always be working towards something, no matter how small.

76) These are the good old days. By almost every measure, us humans have never had it so good. There are no excuses — this is your time.

77) Write a book. Everyone has valuable knowledge to share, you just have to decide you want to share it. There's no old-school publisher standing in your way and you can publish a book for free. Publishing is now a choice. Decide to share. Decide to write. Decide to publish.

78) Don't grow up too much. This 78th tip is the most important one of all. It came to me after I had originally finished and published this book, so it doesn't appear in the earliest electronic versions. It's not even accounted for in the title.

There was a time when I dreamed of being a garbage man, riding on the back bumper of the truck between stops, wind in my face. When I was told that this job would probably require a daily bath, I decided that I'd rather be a superhero — they always looked clean. I didn't worry about how I'd become a superhero or whether I might fail, I just wanted to fly.

Growing up, I was taught that people didn't fly or have magical powers. I needed to choose a more practical profession. I became more aware of my limitations and more averse to failure. I was growing up too much.

It wasn't until after my own child was born that I began to experience life as a kid again, through my daughter's eyes. She wanted to be a princess and she thought she could read my mind. The former is quite possible and the latter is becoming science, with the help of sensors and computers. Yesterday's magic is today's reality — good reason to not discourage a child's dreams or limit your own.

While this book offers tips for grown-up men, this book's existence is symbolic of the fearlessness of my own youth. Don't grow up too much.

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44 Thoughts For Anyone

This collection of brief thoughts is new for the second edition. I've written these over the past five years as Facebook status updates. I don't think I would've written and shared these thoughts if I didn't have such an inspiring group of online friends.

1) One of the best things a human can do is contribute to the creation of another human and then devote time to raising and teaching that human how to learn and be kind.

2) Being thankful should be like drinking water — both are absolutely necessary and should be done often and deeply.

3) Here's a general rule that I've found to be constructive for me — and those around me — whenever applied properly: Don't be a jackass.

4) Life is like an airplane trip. If the oxygen masks drop from overhead, it's not selfish to put yours on first. You can only take care of others after you've taken care of yourself.

5) If things turn out worse than you imagined, you don't have much of an imagination.

6) Snob: A person whose behavior is not attributable to wealth or status but to insecurity.

7) Everything works out for the best if you make the best of everything.

8) Tomorrow: Don't achieve, excel or hustle — just be nice. All day. To everyone.

9) If something about you is bothering me, it's probably something about me that's bothering me.

10) Committee: The fair way to get less done with more people.

11) My favorite time is now, but memories are a close second.

12) Life is more like fishing than a box of chocolates. You never know what you're going to get, and you have to fight for it before you know what it is.

13) The only thing worse than listening to politicians is listening to journalists talk about politicians. Actually, listening to celebrities talk about journalists who talk about politicians — that's the worst thing.

14) If you run until you can't run any farther, you can still run a lot farther.

15) Please see the email I sent regarding the voicemail I left to confirm that you got my text message.

16) It's always a proud moment to complete a repair — and with fewer parts than the manufacturer thought were necessary.

17) Wisdom is a realization that no one else knows what they're doing either.

18) In life, to be loved — in death, remembered.

19) I'm most confident stating the obvious.

20) I'm not sure which is more work — getting through a week of school as a kid or getting a kid through a week of school as a parent.

21) Everything happens — the reason is up to you.

22) The Zero Footprint Rule: When one is a guest in another's home, one must not be discoverable by a trail of one's stuff.

23) Only after the concept of alternating in traffic is understood and universally practiced will world peace be achievable.

24) Fool backwards is loof. Don't be a loof.

25) How can I trust you if you don't even wait for your turn at a four-way stop?

26) Morpalaprom. That's the new word I created to replace palindrome — because palindrome is not a palindrome.

27) I'll take a cheerful disagreement over a grudging compromise.

28) Can one be stubborn AND right?

29) The Universe is a symphony, but sometimes there's a tuba solo.

30) What doesn't kill you makes you stronger — but could also significantly shorten your lifespan.

31) A problem for kids in the modern world is parents who think the modern world is a problem for kids.

32) To copy is human — to attribute, divine.

33) Hug your kids, hug your relatives, hug your friends — even if you disagree with them.

34) You can learn the most from those who give advice the least.

35) Things rarely go as planned even if you plan for things to not go as planned.

36) Imagination is memories without the experience.

37) Heartbreak deepens the cup of love.

38) If you keep trying, you'll soon be doing.

39) What was once thought of as nothing is something, and what was once believed to be something is mostly nothing.

40) Unlike old media, good news is popular on Facebook.

41) Text is an ideal medium for sarcasm.

42) Imagine the unimaginable. It sounds impossible, but that's the future.

43) Be wary of byzantine, sophistic semantics which promulgate, via obfuscationary suppositions, the usurpation of common sensibilities.

44) "I don't like it, but it's brilliant." -A good critic.

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Confessions

Writing and publishing this book scared the heck out of me. My greatest fears were that the book wouldn’t be long enough and that my writing wouldn’t be good enough. I had to remind myself that this work might never be perfect, but it had to get done. I pushed forward, kept writing, continued editing, stuck to my schedule and then forced myself to stop proofreading and stop editing.

My daughter was observing my progress, so a failure to follow through would’ve been contrary to almost everything I’ve taught her.

About a week from my deadline, I found my voice and my insecurities began to fade. This little book may be too short and my writing may not be good enough, but I overcame my fears, gave it my best and finished. And now I've finished the second edition.

I hope you've found something meaningful or inspiring here. If you have, please forward this book along to friends and family.

Your time is valuable. Thank you for spending some of it reading my words.

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About The Author:

I'm a single dad, born in Texas and living in Southern California.

I like remembering the past so I can enjoy the present and prepare for the future.

I've spent the past two years working on Scrapboom and plan on launching the platform in 2013. Scrapboom is your time machine.

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